

T H E  
**Christian History ;**

Containing Accounts of the Propagation and Revival  
of Religion in *Great Britain, America, &c.*

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Saturday DECEMBER 22. 1744. § N<sup>o</sup>. 95.  
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*An Account of the late Revival of Religion at Taunton,  
continued.*

**M**R. *Wheelock* left the People generally if not universally impress'd with a serious and awful Sense of invifible Realities ; converfing about the great Truths of our moft holy Religion, and the important Concerns of their immortal Souls ; fearching into their State towards GOD ; fearing, complaining, and inquiring *what they fhould do* ; longing after the *Word* and *Ordinances*. In a Word, their Tho'ts feem'd almoft wholly taken up about the great Things of another World, endeavouring in all appointed Means to fecure the one Thing needful.--- I found a *few* who had received *Comfort* ; and *many others* appeared to have fuch deep *Convictions* of their finful condemned State by Nature, and fuch awful Apprehenfions of the Anger of GOD due to them for Sin, that they feem'd like Perfons who had received a Sentence of Death, and had a Gloominefs over-fpreading all their worldly Enjoyments which they had fo inordinately placed their Affections upon and eagerly purfued after. They feem'd ftruck with Amazement at their Danger ; & the Awfulnefs of a Chriftlefs State, and their paff Blindnefs and Stupidity therein, and were feeking after JESUS, after Pardon, Acceptance, &c.

This Morning I with the Rev. Mr. *Wales* went to *Middleborough* firft Precinct, to a ftated Lecture, where there was a Sermon delivered, and Power attended it. -- The Sermon was plain, fearching, awful, &c. It's chief Tendency was to difcover the Danger of a Chriftlefs State---to open and explain the Gospel-Way of Salvation by JESUS CHRIST---to fhew  
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them that now was the Day of CHRIST's Patience with them---to give some Characters of those who had opened to, or believed in CHRIST--and to invite and beseech all to open to, or believe in CHRIST that they might be saved, &c.

There was a plentiful Shower of divine Grace which fell upon the Assembly.---Numbers had their Sins set in Order before their Eyes, having the Sins of their Lives, and the Plague of their Hearts discovered to them, fearing, trembling, complaining and enquiring, *What they should do to be saved.* They seemed, from their natural legal Spirit, ready to catch hold of any Thing that they might be delivered from the Wrath which is to come, and to be opposite to submitting to the Righteousness of GOD as all natural Men are--Numbers, yea even some young Persons had such Discoveries of their Sin and Misery by Nature, as could be given them by none save the HOLY GHOST, whose Office it is to convince of Sin.---Indeed almost the whole Assembly appear'd to be impress'd with a serious Concern for the Salvation of their Souls: but some had clearer & deeper Convictions than others, &c. Oh how feelingly did they speak & complain of their Sins, especially the Sin of their Nature; such as Pride, &c. Oh how earnest & solicitous were they in their Inquiries after JESUS CHRIST and an Interest in him, &c. How did they fear lest they should fall short of CHRIST; lest their Convictions should wear off, &c.---We tarried, after the Exercise was over, some Time with them in the Meeting-House that we might converse and pray with them, counsel, exhort them, &c. we left them that Evening and returned home.

The spiritual Concern still remained upon the Minds of this People and increased if any Thing.

There were presently several Societies of young Persons formed in Town for Prayer, reading GOD's Word and good Books, singing GOD's Praises: and some or all of them agreed to meet twice a Week stately, besides other occasional Meetings Lectures public and private. There were also in a little Time one or two Family Meetings set up in Town for religious Exercises.

I found little if any open Opposition as yet among the People: Tho' afterwards the religious Concern among some of the People wearing off or at least abating, they began to stumble at and oppose more freely and openly these Appearances.

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On Friday being desired by the *Negroes*, I preach'd to them with many others that attended at my Lodgings, from *Rom. 8. 1. There is no Condemnation to them that are in CHRIST JESUS.* In my Sermon I endeavour'd to open and confirm the State of Condemnation in which all Mankind naturally lye; to open the Way provided for the Salvation of Sinners by GOD, and exhibited to them in the Gospel, viz. thro' the *Righteousness* of CHRIST imputed to them and received by Faith alone; to shew them the Safety and Happiness of those that were in CHRIST by Faith, and the Sin and Misery of those who were Unbelievers and in a State of Condemnation &c: to give some *Marks* and Characters of *Believers*, and to urge upon Sinners to give themselves no Rest until they had secured an Interest in the *Righteousness* of CHRIST by a Faith of GOD's Operation.

We had a crowded Assembly, and much of the gracious Presence of GOD. The whole Assembly seem'd to be under the Influences of the HOLY SPIRIT. They appear'd to come and hear the Word in some Measure convinced of the great Necessity they were under of securing an Interest in CHRIST. They appear'd not to be careless Hearers, but to hunger after the Word; looking and waiting critically and earnestly for a Word suited to their particular Cases, and waiting for the Power of the HOLY GHOST to accompany and make it effectual for their Salvation.

Some were under *Consolation*, joying and rejoicing, and appear'd to be filled with Love to a precious CHRIST, and to all Men, especially those who they hoped were of the Household of Faith, for CHRIST's Sake. Others appear'd to be in deep *Distress* for Sin, and for fear of the Wrath to come, enquiring *What they should do?*

The next Sabbath I preach'd to them from *Prov. 12. 26. The Righteous is more excellent than his Neighbour.* From which I endeavour'd to shew who this righteous Man was, viz. One who was made just or righteous thro' the *Righteousness* of CHRIST imputed to him and received by Faith alone, and who was moreover inherently righteous and holy; who was a *new Creature*, being sanctified in all the Faculties of his Soul by the supernatural Influences of the HOLY GHOST. I endeavour'd briefly to shew, how the Sinner was brought to CHRIST and *justified* and *sanctified*; and also wherein the righteous Man was more excellent than his

Neighbour, and improved the whole. But Oh what an Awe appeared on the Minds of the Assembly ! With what Weight and Power did the Word appear to be attended ! There were *two* or *three* cried out in the Forenoon, one of which received Comfort.

Now *Sabbaths* were prized and seriously regarded. More or less of the Power of GOD accompanied the public and private Assemblies of his People. There was often much of the divine Presence with them in their private Meetings, when they had Preaching, and also when they had not. I could and did preach frequently with the People. They appear'd to be swift to hear, especially *young People*---They seem'd to hear as for their Lives. They were wakeful, serious, reverent and attentive in *God's House* ; and gladly embrac'd Opportunities of hearing his Word. Oh it is sweet preaching when People are desirous of Hearing ! sweet feeding the Flock of CHRIST, when they have so good an Appetite ! Yea sweet seeing it fed, if one is not permitted to feed it.---*In those Days* surely the Word of the LORD was precious : Many like new born Babes desiring the sincere Milk of the Word that they might grow thereby. Their merry Meetings were turned into praying and singing Assemblies : Their vain foolish and frothy Conversation into religious and experimental Discourse. When People occasionally visited one another, or providentially met together, their Conversation turned on religious Topicks. When I visited them, or they me, they wou'd be conversing about Religion, and asking serious and important Questions about their Souls ; about *doctrinal* and *experimental* Religion. What a wonderful Reformation was there in this Town ! It is impossible fully to describe it. Moreover, I labour under some peculiar Disadvantages, so that I can't give so full and particular an Account of Things of a religious Nature, especially in the Time of the greatest Out-pouring of the HOLY SPIRIT, as otherwise I might have done : Being but a *Stranger* among and unacquainted with them, and not committing particular Accounts of Things to Writing in the Time of them ; and labouring under many *Perplexities*, particularly awful spiritual Darkeness, Desertion and Temptation for the most of that *Fall* and *Winter* ; my Memory also being impaired thereby. Indeed it was a Wonder of the Power and Grace of GOD, that I was carried thro' the Service I was called unto.

Some-

Sometime in *November* on the *Sabbath*, I preached to a full Assembly.--There appear'd to be an awful Concern continuing upon the Minds of the People in general ; tho' I fear'd not so great as had been ; and was fearing lest God was about to depart from us : But when the *Afternoon* Exercise was over, some were in great Anguish of Soul, groaning, sobbing, &c.--Being obliged to set out on a Journey the next Day, I appointed to preach another Sermon at the Meeting House in the *Evening*. Accordingly at the Time appointed I returned to the Meeting House, and found that many were in great Distress. I preached to a considerably large Assembly, from *Rom. 8. 1.* Many among the Assembly were deeply affected, groaning and sobbing ; tho' not so as to disturb the People in or hinder them from hearing, as I remember.

After the Exercise was concluded, the Distress among the People appeared greater : Many groaning or crying out, complaining of their Sins and Danger, of their Blindness, Hard-Heartedness, &c. There appear'd a great Weeping and Mourning among the People for the Sins and the Miseries to which they were exposed. Indeed the *whole Assembly*, old and young, seem'd to be concern'd in a greater or less Degree ; tho' indeed some were rejoicing in CHRIST in Hopes of their Interest in him, and also to see others in Distress for their miserable and sinful State by Nature : not meerly to see their Distress, but because of the Reasons of it, and because they hoped it would issue well.

I pray'd several Times with the People, and exhorted them, we sung, &c. I conversed particularly with many young and old as they were brought to me. We tarried in the Meeting-House 'till nine of the Clock for what I know, and then retired. It was indeed a wonderful *Evening* of the *Out-pouring* of the SPIRIT, as a SPIRIT of Grace and Supplication upon his People.

In the Time of my Absence there was a stated monthly *Lecture* among this People, preached by the Rev. Mr. *Tobey* of *Berkley*. I heard that God was graciously present with his People.

Upon my Return the next Week or the Week after, as I remember (having supply'd the Pulpit in my Absence) I found People were *stumbling* at these Things, more openly *cavilling*, &c. I found more *Disputing*, &c. which was a Dis-service to the Work of God as it grieved the HOLY SPIRIT,  
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and kept People more from conversing with their own Hearts. The serious Concern about their Souls was much abated, if it was not wholly lost in some. Yet many or the most were still under Convictions, excepting some who had found Peace in believing, who continued serious and diligent in their Attendance upon the Duties of their Station. Yea and perhaps some who appear'd uneasy at these Things might still be under some spiritual Concern of Mind.

I accepted of their Call to the *Pastoral Office*, & continued preaching and conversing among them until the *latter End of January*.--But Difficulties arising and increasing about my Settlement, and more appearing openly against me; being sent for by a Relation of mine, I went to *Ipswich* to take his Advice.---Upon my coming to *Ipswich* and conversing with him, He said he would go to *Taunton* & preach for me a Fortnight or three Weeks, & see how Things were circumstanced there, and I should tarry and supply a Winter Parish which he had the Charge of. Accordingly I consented.---But I was detained much longer from *Taunton* than I expected by Reason of the Difficulties of the Season: so that it was towards the *latter End of March* when I returned to *Taunton*.---Here I would just observe, that in this Time I had Opportunity to see much of the glorious Work of GOD's Grace which he was carrying on at *Ipswich* and other Places at the *Eastward*.--And surely there was a remarkable and plentiful *Out-pouring* of the HOLY SPIRIT there.---

Upon my Return to *Taunton*; I found the religious Concern upon People not to be so great in general as it was when I left them, as I could learn: Tho' the People in general appeared still to be serious & thoughtful, to be seeking to secure the one Thing needful:---The preached Gospel was fully attended especially on Lord's-Day, and attended with general Seriousness, Concern and a seeming Appetite.

Things of a religious Nature remain'd much the same 'till *May 19th, 1742*. upon which Day I was solemnly *ordained* to the *Pastoral Office* over them.--Since that, there have indeed been several Times of Refreshing, and some *Revival* of GOD's Work. There have since been some cryings out under Convictions and Consolations in public and private Meetings. Some have had fresh Convictions; others their old ones renewed.

Several

Several *Sacramental Occasions* have been special Seasons of Refreshment to the People of God : especially the *first Sacrament* I administred, I believe was a sweet and Soul reviving Feast to many Souls ; many I believe were bro't into CHRIST's Banqueting-House, his Banner over them was Love.----

Also at a *Catechising* of the *Children* (after I had catechised them) I discoursed to them from *Prov.* 8. 17. and in as familiar a Manner as I was capable, taught them the Love of GOD to those who love him, and urged the Necessity and Advantage of early Piety.---Some of them were affected while I was discoursing, and in Prayer their Distress increased. After which several cried out in great Distress of Mind.---They complained of Fears of Hell, want of Love to GOD ; and that tho' CHRIST was willing they were unwilling, &c. I spake scarce any terrible Words to them, chusing rather a soft and gentle Method of treating them. I spake little of Hell and Damnation ; but chiefly of the Love of GOD, his readiness to receive *little Children*, the Advantages of loving him, &c. Their Concern appeared not to proceed from an Affrightment but from a *scriptural Conviction* of Sin ; of those Sins which fall not under the Notice of a Conscience unenlightened by the SPIRIT of GOD, tho' it is to be feared that their Convictions have not issued savingly. And as to some perhaps the unkind Neglects, if not Discouragements of their Parents, have had an awful Influence into their losing of their Convictions.----

Nevertheless in the *general* People have been growing more cold, dull and lifeless in Religion.---There have been but few hopeful Conversions since my Ordination, the most who were brought home, having been brought home in the Fall and Winter. So that generally speaking, there has been an awful Withdraw of the divine Influence both from Saints and Sinners. An Occasion of which might be the Disputes about my Ordination, and also for and against these Things ; as also false Reports and Prejudices thereby raised in the Minds of People : whereby the HOLY SPIRIT was grieved, and the spiritual Concern of many abated.---Some of our private Meetings have come to nothing, tho' others are still attended.---Many who have been under the divine Influences have fallen away, and some I fear are more blinded and hardened than ever, cavilling and mocking, &c.---Some still remain

remain under Convictions.----Some it is to be feared who have reformed and returned, have not returned to the most High, but to some Refuge of Lies.----Others in a Judgment of Charity, have experienced a saving and thorough Work.---Some few who were Professors, I trust, have been pluck'd off from their false Foundations, and have been savingly converted to GOD.---An *Hundred and two* have joined in full Communion with this Church, tho' none lately.---A *few others* of this People in the Time of the Vacancy (who have been wrought upon in this Day of GOD's great Grace) join'd in full Communion with other Churches. ---- *Three* or *four* have renew'd baptismal Covenant. ---- *Three* or *four* more have been baptiz'd.----So that upon the whole it is evident to the Glory of the GOD of all Grace, that there has been a remarkable Shower of divine Grace among this People; the HOLY SPIRIT has been poured out in his common and special Influences upon them; the most or all of them have first or last been under serious Concern of Soul and Searchings of Heart. ----Some much reformed, others really converted, &c. tho' many are return'd to their former Course of Wickedness, as the Dog to his Vomit, and the Sow that was washed to her wallowing in the Mire.

Thus I have given you some *general* and imperfect Account of what the LORD has wrought among this People in the late Day of his *great Grace*. But before I conclude my Account, I beg Leave to speak more particularly to some Things, viz.

(To be continued.)

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# A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

*In a few Days will be Published,*

**S**ome Account of the Experience of the Work of GOD, and the Revealing of JESUS CHRIST in the Heart of John Edwards in London. Written by Himself. And published that Men may know how gracious the LORD is.

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